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LETTER DATED 16 MARCH 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SENEGAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the statement made on Tuesday, 10 March 1993, by H.E. Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal and current Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kéba Birane CISSE

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Annex

Statement by H.E. Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal and current Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

The international community, in general, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, in particular, have never ceased, from the outset, to condemn vigorously the Serbian aggression against the independent Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the unacceptable "ethnic cleansing" perpetrated against the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, mainly against the Muslim segment.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference, which spearheads the world campaign for the cessation of such war crimes and crimes against humanity, has devoted three extraordinary sessions of its deliberative bodies to the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina: two of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, in June 1992 at Istanbul and in December 1992 at Jeddah, and one of the Bureau of the Sixth Islamic Summit Conference, enlarged by the Chairmen of the Standing Committees on 11 January 1993 at Dakar.

Acting strictly on the basis of the international rule of law, it has been able to exert pressure and a determining influence on the decision-making process and on international action relating to the tragedy of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, both in the process at the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia in London and within the United Nations Security Council.

The Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the ad hoc Contact Group established by that Organization at United Nations Headquarters have been the effective instruments of this diplomatic action, one recent result of which was the decision by the Security Council of the United Nations to establish an international tribunal for the prosecution of the perpetrators of crimes against humanity in the former Yugoslavia, and more particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the same time, efforts have been made in the humanitarian field, with the formulation by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Islamic Development Bank of a joint programme to provide humanitarian assistance to the sorely tried people of Bosnia and Herzegovina; this assistance has been pooled with other assistance provided by humanitarian organizations for distribution under the auspices of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Unfortunately, however, the Organization of the Islamic Conference has been unable so far to persuade the United Nations Security Council to revise the embargo on arms shipments to the former Yugoslavia in order to enable Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country which is unarmed and the victim of aggression, to acquire the means of self-defence. It has, however, been able to exert maximum pressure to prevent the Serbs from imposing their unacceptable plan of carving up this battered country, a position which has also been endorsed by the current Government of the United States.

At a time when the tripartite negotiations in New York have been suspended - temporarily, it is to be hoped - and when the United States of America, in a splendid show of solidarity, is carrying out airdrops of foodstuffs and medicines over Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Organization of the Islamic Conference is intensifying consultations at all levels with a view to a thorough evaluation of the situation in the former Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the adoption of the necessary measures to guarantee the national unity, territorial integrity and reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to ensure that those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the former Yugoslavia are effectively brought to justice and punished accordingly.

It is for that reason that, as the current Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, I have asked the Secretary-General of that Organization to give the highest priority to the effective contribution of its member States and to the establishment of the international tribunal envisaged by the United Nations.

I also urge the international community, in particular the United Nations, to do its utmost to ensure the adoption of a plan for a global settlement of the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the basis of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, which prohibit any acquisition of territory by force.

Abdou DIOUF